except the already recognized traditional systems of medicines namely Ayurveda, Siddha, Unani, Homoeopathy and drug less therapies such as Yoga and Naturopathy which were found to fulfill the essential and desirable criteria developed by the Committee. The recommendations of the Committee have been examined and accepted by the Government.

Indian Medicine Central Council (IMCC) Act of 1970, regulates the practice of Ayurveda, Siddha and Unani doctors, teaching standards, medical ethics etc. The practice of Homoeopathy is regulated under the Central Council of Homoeopathy Act, 1973. The Drugs & Cosmetics Act, 1940, and rules thereunder regulate the quality standards of Ayurveda, Siddha, Unani and Homoeopathy drugs. Pharmacopoeial standards of 324 Ayurvedic and 45 Unani drugs have been published by the Government of India. It is necessary for the manufacturers to comply with these standards.

Prices of Steel

*266. SHRI PYARELAL KHANDELWAL: Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that existing mechanism has not been able to check the prices of steel;

(b) whether fluctuation in steel prices has created chaos in market during the previous year;

(c) if so, the reasons behind such fluctuation of steel prices; and

(d) the steps Government propose to take to check the prices of steel?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN): (a) In a liberalised and deregulated environment steel prices are determined by the interplay of market forces and the Government does not intervene directly to influence prices. Though the Government has tried to stabilise steel prices through various policy initiatives, domestic prices of steel have generally moved in tandem with international prices.

(b) Concerns against rising steel prices have continuously been expressed by the Steel consuming industry throughout the previous year.

(c) While domestic prices are generally fagged with international prices, the price rise during the previous year is reported to be the result of rising

raw material costs during this period and growing demand. In a competitive market, steel producers adjust their prices depending on market conditions.

(d) In a liberalised environment the Government does not intervene directly in the market to influence prices. However, the Government, through its policy initiatives, has taken several steps to ensure availability of steel and stablise the price in the domestic market which *inter-alia* include the following:-

(i) reduction in customs duty on non alloy steel from 25% to 10%

(ii) reduction in customs duty on alloy steel from 25% to 15%.

(iii) abolition of 4% Special Additional Duty (SAD) on imports.

(iv) lowering of excise duty on steel items from 16% to 12%

(v) substantial increase in the allocation of steel items, during 2004-05, for supply to the SSI units under the Small Scale Industries Corporations (SSIC) scheme.

The Government is carefully monitoring the price situation and all necessary steps will be taken to help ensure stability in prices in the future.

Improving Condition of Shepherds

*267. SHRI K.B. KRISHNA MURTHY: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have received any proposal from the Karnataka Government for improving the condition of shepherds under a special scheme drawn up by the Karnataka Sheep and Wool Development Corporation;

(b) if so, the estimated cost of the proposal;

(c) the details of the expansion plans, etc; and

(d) the present status of the above proposal?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): (a) to (d) Government of Karnataka has sent proposals from time to time for assistance in development of Sheep and Wool. Proposals have been received in February, '03, October, '03 and March, 2004.